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Sakharov blasts CIA's treatment of double agents

By DIANA DIAMOND

Vladimir Sakharov, once a Soviet spy and now a visiting scholar at Stanford's Hoover Institution, is angry at the CIA. He complains bitterly about the way he and other defectors have been treated by the agency.

He charges that the CIA, which is always on the lookout for potential defectors, regards them as turncoats and traitors to their own country.

"The CIA's only interest in defectors has been to entice them to come to the U.S., squeeze all the information they can out of them, and then abandon them." Defectors are abused and betrayed by the CIA, he says.

Sakharov contends that if the CIA wants to rely on defectors, who are "first-hand intelligence sources and long-term resources," then the agency must provide more for them when they come to the U.S., truly help them resettle and find jobs commensurate with their skills.

"My relationship with the CIA is rotten," Sakharov admits, sitting in his second-floor office in the Lou Henry Hoover Pavilion. "They don't like me and I don't care about them."

When contacted by Stanford News Service, a CIA spokesman said the agency had no comment.

Sakharov's concerns were the subject of a segment of CBS-TV's 60 Minutes. The program focused on charges leveled against the CIA by Sakharov and Michael Balogh, a Hungarian defector.

Sakharov was appointed to a six-month term at Hoover in January. The subject of his study as a visiting scholar is "Demographic and Ethnic Distribution in the Soviet Union," with a focus on how this reflects on Soviet foreign service. It is work he enjoys doing, he says, and work that is satisfying.

Sakharov's story

But it took Sakharov several years—fraught with frustrations—to find work in the U.S. that he enjoys.

This is Sakharov's story, as he tells it.

He earned a graduate degree from the Institute of International Relations in the Soviet Union, and soon became a Soviet foreign diplomat. He went to North Yemen in 1967, and then was stationed in Alexandria, Egypt, from 1968 to 1970. He then became a diplomat in Kuwait, and it was from there that he defected in 1971.

Sakharov is not explicit about when he first became involved in spying for the CIA, but he says he was a double agent for at least six months in Kuwait. He admitted there was some contact beforehand.

"The CIA would have preferred to have me stay on my job in Kuwait," Sakharov says, but his USSR assignment there ended in the summer and he did not want to return to the Soviet Union.

At the time of his defection, Sakharov says he had "vague promises" from the CIA that he would be given a good job when he came to the U.S.

He defected, he says, because he was "disillusioned with the diplomatic service system. You have to report on your colleagues before they report on you."

America had held some enchantment for him because his father, a diplomatic courier, had traveled to the U.S. a great deal, and Sakharov in his youth became familiar with American literature and music. He also loved jazz.

Money was not an incentive to defect, he says. "If the Soviets would try to recruit Americans (to defect) for ideological considerations, it would be almost impossible. For a Soviet, freedom means more than money. In fact, I refused to take any money at first." Defection itself became his ticket to come to the U.S.

Both the KGB and the CIA are constantly on the lookout for defectors within the other's ranks. "We knew who each other was," and, in fact, there is a "professionalism" that both share, he said. Agents are approached, especially in their early years. "I think the older officers are much less vulnerable to recruitment by the CIA."

The CIA's debriefing

Sakharov was brought by the CIA to a "safe house" near Washington, D.C. Two CIA security guards followed him everywhere, he says. He could not go out of the safe house without heavy security, and had no social life except an occasional meal in a cheap restaurant around Washington late at night.

During the day he was debriefed, he says, by individuals who only used their first names, such as Jack or Tom. Next he had to take polygraph, psychological and vocational tests "designed for U.S. nationals and not necessarily tailored to analyze the aptitudes and the capabilities of the Russian character and background."

"Bit by bit the CIA analysts got what they wanted and the defector has been squeezed dry."

"Then the resettlement people enter the scene. Their responsibility is to scare the defector and intimidate him into total submission. He is told that the KGB is out to get him and that his life is completely in the hands of his new masters. He is literally frightened into changing his identity."

"After a year or so of isolation, interrogation, psychological testing and intimidation, he has nothing left to give. He feels alone, abandoned and betrayed. Instead of being treated as an ally or someone of quality and value, he is treated as a nonentity. Once that is done, he no longer officially exists."

"His real identity now belongs to the CIA. Should he



Vladimir Sakharov, visiting scholar at the Hoover Institution, complains bitterly about the way he and other defectors have been treated by the agency. Defectors are abused and betrayed by the CIA, he says.

disappear, neither the Soviets nor the American public would ever know. He is under total physical control of a small secret group which handles his resettlement. A defector cannot protest because he has no one to protest to."

Living in Hollywood with German papers

The next step, Sakharov says, is for the CIA to get the defector away from Washington.

He was sent to Hollywood, and claims he was dropped on the corner of Hollywood and Vine, with a \$430-a-month subsistence guarantee.

"I was told, 'You are no longer a Russian; forget all that diplomatic crap. You are a German; your father died at El Alamein and your mother drowned in the Volga River.'"

Sakharov says he began to get discouraged. He started looking for a job. The CIA said he should enroll in a hotel school, which was located in a seedy part of Hollywood. He did, and the school closed three weeks later.

Then the CIA suggested he might like to work at Disneyland as an Arab translator for visiting dignitaries. "When I suggested that to the personnel department there, they looked at me strangely," Sakharov says.

During the course of the next year, he says he sent out more than 600 resumes, but had few responses.

"My background and my resume didn't work."

"What personnel manager is going to believe there is such a company as Hamdulla Shipping and Receiving in Beirut for which this German who really speaks with a heavy Russian accent has worked? If he is lucky, he may get a job in a car wash."

Which is exactly what Sakharov said he had to do for a short time to make ends meet. He also worked as a security guard.

He also said he tried to call one of the companies in New York listed on his resume, but the operator had no listing for that company.

"The CIA case officers change each year, and I finally got a good one," Sakharov said. He told him he wanted to enroll in the USC Ph.D. program in international relations, and he got into the school.

Against CIA advice, he married an American in 1975, and the CIA, he says, threatened to drop him from the program.

He continued for awhile, and then "got a position in an electronics company in Newport Beach, working in international marketing."

"Six months later on the job, the CIA said I should go back to school. Then they said they wanted me to work for a firm in the Research Triangle in North Carolina," but the job never materialized.

"My association with the CIA was hopeless. I was on my own. I finally got a deal with a publisher, and I wrote a book on my being a double agent." The book is titled *High Treason*.

At that point, Sakharov said, he went public and appeared on a number of TV shows and started on the lecture circuit.

"The CIA said I should go back to my old identity and told me they would not be responsible for anything."

"I told the resettlement people I understand their agency position. But they also told me that they knew that 16 KGB agents had landed in New York to get me."

"It is easy for them to keep a defector under control. Their policy is to provide the absolute minimum help, and yet keep the defector under control."

Sakharov said he severed relations with the CIA in 1979, the same year he received his Ph.D.

Sakharov claims he then was employed as a consultant for a number of global international companies involved in foreign marketing.

He became active as the director for the Institute for

Federal Studies, a think tank located in Washington, D.C., and wrote a number of articles for newspapers and magazines.

He had been thinking about a project at Hoover for a couple of years, and Murray Feckback of the Kennedy Institute for Population Research assisted him. He also was helped by John Moore, a senior fellow at Hoover, who, Sakharov said, "was courageous enough to take me under his auspices."

Sakharov said he would defect again, but this time, "I would do it differently. I would never go for a change of identity. I know I would be told my life would be in jeopardy, but that is better than the miserable existence I had."

Part of the Soviet puzzle

How much help was he to the CIA?

"I was part of the mosaic. I had bits and pieces of information. I did certain tasks, and this was at the height of Soviet relations with the PLO. I tried to get students there to study in the Soviet Union. I also had access to the Soviet's black list of Americans, which is a sensitive book in the diplomatic service."

The book, he said, contains names of American journalists, immigrants, students and businessmen—"people who might be spying."

While he says he has terrible relations with the CIA, "my relations with the (American) military are outstanding."

Sakharov said he has been invited to lecture at the Defense Intelligence School in D.C., talk at military academies, and brief U.S. military attaches.

Since he has been at Hoover, he also has lectured before a number of women's and civic groups. He has a New York agent who makes the speaking engagements for him.

He has given a number of speeches before industrial-military-defense-related groups, in which he talks about the necessity for Americans to understand the Soviets—not only from an ideological and political point of view, but from the social dynamics at work.

Soviet decision-making oftentimes is based upon the mores of the Moscow community, which he described as "a closed city," limited primarily to the families of the high-level intelligentsia. People there frequently get paid in golden rubles, which can be resold on the black market, and are of greater value than the ordinary ruble.

"The only way you can deal with the Soviets is to deal with them personally. They have to know you. You can't shout at them across the ocean and call them the 'evil empire.'"

The CIA should improve

Sakharov said that Russian defectors coming into the U.S. "need a guiding hand."

They need someone in high authority to contact think tanks and universities and try to place them in appropriate jobs. "Everything is done on a personal basis in America. Nothing is done on the merits of people."

The Russians, he said, "have been brought up to obey and be guided. It's very unsettling for the Russians to make decisions."

"Of course, the CIA maintains that it, in conjunction with other services, offers protection to defectors, but what good is protection if a defector can barely survive on his subsistence and is unable to get a job with some dignity and the possibility of a future?"

"The defector now is trapped between the resettlement people and the blank wall. If he protests, they only make it harder for him. The real beneficiary of all this is the KGB. They no longer have to hunt defectors down and destroy them. The CIA does it for them. The KGB actually uses the CIA to keep its own people in line."